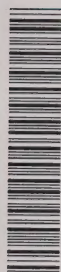


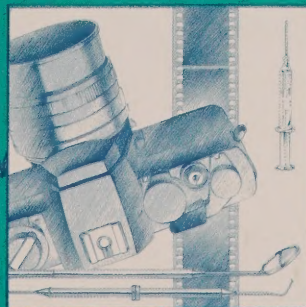
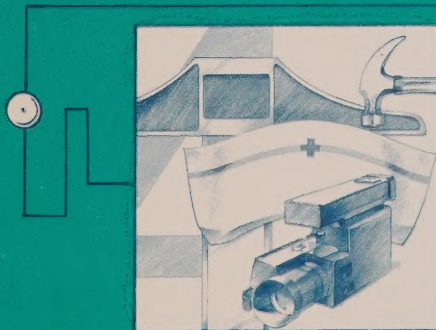
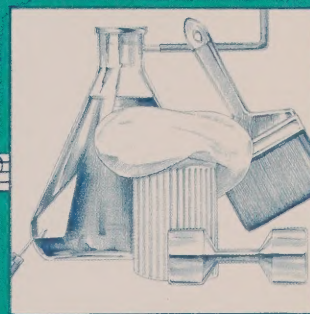
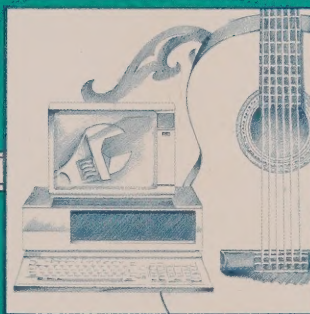
CA24N
L
-1988
B62



3 1761 11895394 2

Bridges to Employment for Students With Disabilities

A Resource Guide for School-to-Work Transition (SWT) Programs



Ministry of Labour
Gregory Sorbara
Minister



Ministry of Education
Chris Ward
Minister



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto



<https://archive.org/details/31761118953942>

Contents

CA20N
L
-1988
B62

Introduction 2

1

The SWT Program 3

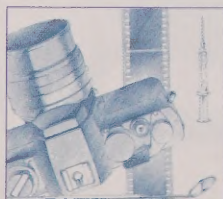
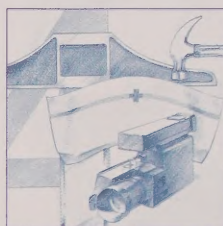
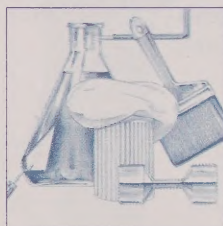
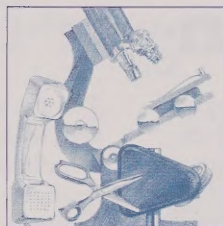
Background and Rationale 4

Basic SWT Model 5

The SWT Team 7

The Role of an Employment
Resource Council 8

Resource Materials 9



2

Training for Successful Job Placement 11

Introduction 12

Assessment of Student
Needs 12

Development of a Student
Transition Plan 13

Job-Site Selection and
Work-Environment
Analysis 14

Placement 15

Supported Employment 16

Follow-Along Activities 16

Resource Materials 17

3

Situating Students in the Workplace 19

Conducting a Job-Market
Survey 20

Marketing the SWT
Program 21

Approaching Employers 21

Related Issues 22

Resource Materials 24

4

Organizing an SWT Program 25

Getting Started 26

Establishing the Program 26

Providing Resources for the
Program 27

Resources 29

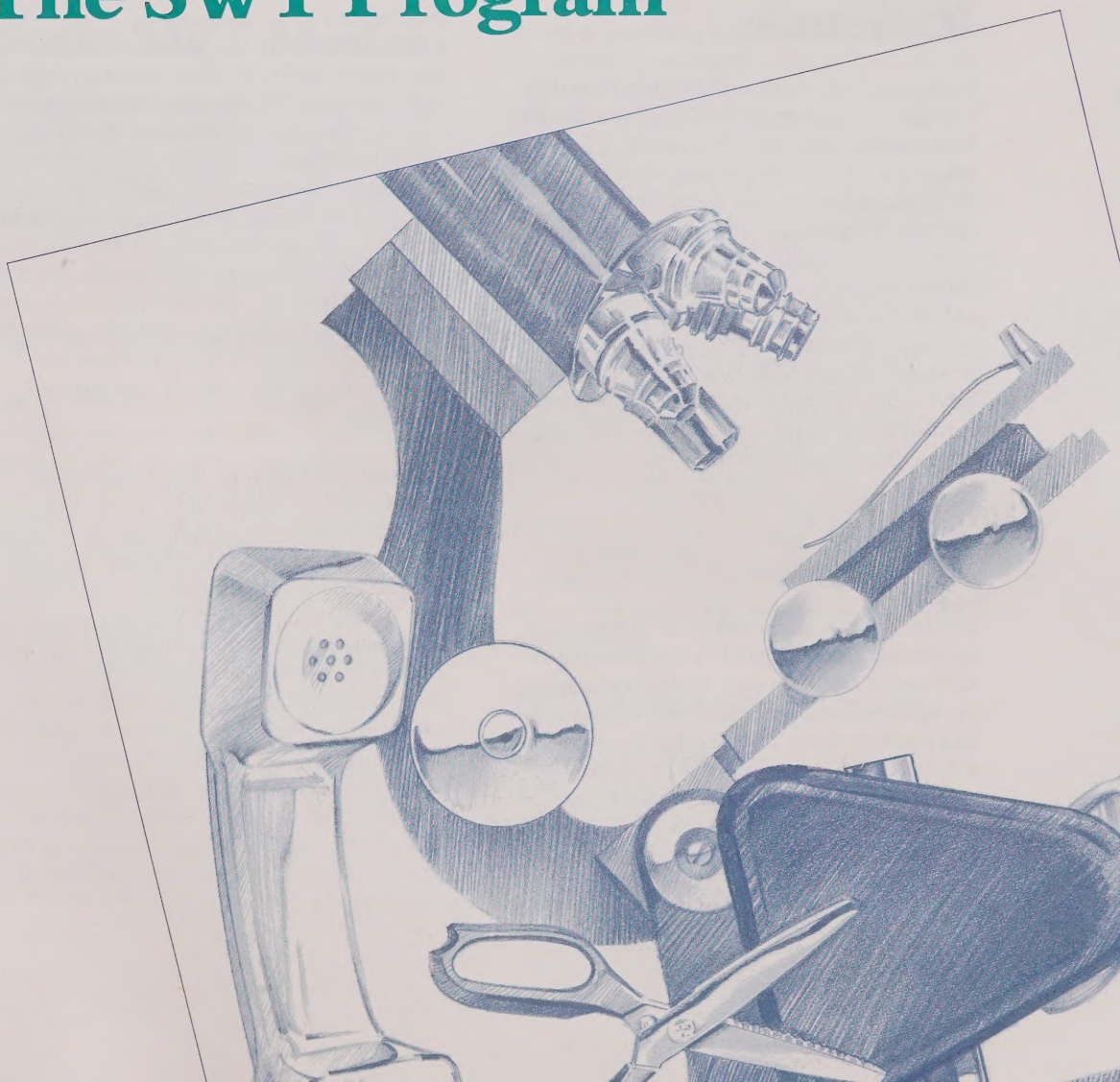
Acknowledgements 32

Introduction

A school-to-work transition (SWT) program is a carefully planned process through which students with disabilities are provided with the skills and vocational training they require to find employment on graduation. Students with disabilities include individuals with one or more of the following: a physical disability caused by bodily injury, a birth defect, or illness; a sensory impairment, such as partial or total blindness, deafness, or muteness; mental handicap or impairment; a learning disability; or a psychiatric or an emotional disorder. Where introduced, SWT initiatives have demonstrated that the aspirations of students with disabilities for jobs that fit their interests can be realized.

The aim of this handbook is to help every student with a disability to become a successful contributor to society by participating in the work force. While the information presented here will be of most interest to secondary school educators wishing to design successful learning experiences leading to employment for students with disabilities, college or university students and their teachers may also find the information helpful. Finally, parents, advocates, community-service agencies, and others may find the handbook of interest because of the supportive and mediating roles that they often play.

1 The SWT Program



Background and Rationale

Studies such as Health and Welfare Canada's Canada Health Survey (1982) and the Ontario Manpower Commission's study on the employment of the physically handicapped (1982) have demonstrated that people with disabilities have labour-force participation rates that are much lower than others. A number of steps have been taken in recent years to redress this inequity. For example, the Education Amendment Act, 1980 (Bill 82) and related initiatives have encouraged schools to include all children in their programs. As well, employment-equity initiatives are encouraging employers to consider the hiring of employees with disabilities.

Schools are a logical place from which to initiate SWT programs for the following reasons:

- One of the fundamental goals of education in Ontario, as enunciated by the Ministry of Education, is to help each student to "acquire skills and attitudes that will lead to satisfaction and productivity in the world of work".
- All students, regardless of their degree of exceptionality pass through a school. Schools provide a regular schedule and a common means through which concerted and co-ordinated approaches to the training of

students with disabilities can be planned. No comparable mechanism exists once students leave school.

- Schools are staffed by personnel who have the creative ability to adapt existing programs (e.g., co-operative education, work experience) to the needs and interests of students with disabilities.
- School personnel are in a position to act as catalysts for change. Their knowledge of the needs of individual students can lead to program modifications at the local school board level, which in turn can contribute to changes in educational policy. One such change is the development of SWT programs that are directed specifically towards students with disabilities.

The idea that everyone should contribute meaningfully to community well-being through work is not new. Almost all societies encourage their members to pursue activities designed to provide for the basic necessities of life. Work not only provides a means of livelihood, but also gives the individual an identity. Thus, when people with disabilities are unemployed, it not only makes them financially dependent on others, but also prevents them from gaining a socially valued identity and role. An expanding base of experience in Canada, the United States, and Europe demonstrates that disabilities cannot be equated with a lack of ability. Thus, the idea that everyone can have a career is plausible.

Educators have a special role to play in making this possible. Children with disabilities may not have the same kinds of experiences as do others. Where most children learn the meaning of work and related skills by helping around the home and by taking on low-paying jobs, children with disabilities often do not. Thus, the task of education may need to be broadened to fill in this gap.

The career path for each student with a disability will be different, just as it is for other students. Some students will aspire to enter a community college or university. Others may

pursue vocational education or an apprenticeship program. Yet others, perhaps because of their interests or the challenging nature of their disability, may need a job-site training approach. While some students may need little or no assistance, others may need help in getting technical aids or in adjusting to the physical environment; still others will require an extensive amount of personal support. The challenge for the teacher is to discover each student's unique potential and to develop a sound SWT program that will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the whole range of student interests.

Basic SWT Model

A useful way to begin an SWT program is to develop a concise model to explain to others what the program includes and to guide the thinking of all those involved in implementing the program. The model outlined below has three main phases: the school foundation, the transition process, and employment.

A. The School Foundation

During their school years students learn essential skills, form attitudes, and define occupational choices. Students with disabilities require an individualized program and a transition plan to ensure that they will have the same opportunities in these areas as do other students.

Individualized program

Students with disabilities vary widely both in interests and abilities. As well, the nature of their disabilities varies. For these reasons their school programs should be tailored to meet their individual needs. For some the program will be similar to that of most other students; relatively simple adaptations to accommodate their disabilities may be all that is required. For others particular attention will need to be

given to providing a school program that is functional (providing them with skills that are appropriate for employment, community living, leisure use, and self-care); integrated (involving them with others in regular settings, both in school and in the community); and community-based (providing them with regular exposure to real work situations in the community).

Transition plan

As the student begins thinking about career opportunities, a formal individualized transition plan should be developed. The plan should identify interests and strengths that the student can build on, skills to be developed, and the type of support to be provided. For students who have not had the opportunity to acquire community and work experience, a plan should be initiated as early as possible to foster both social-skill development and career exploration.

B. The Transition Process

Three elements help to make the transition process a successful one for both the student and the school: job exploration, parental input and support, and, when appropriate, agreements with relevant community agencies.

Job exploration

A planned process of trying out different jobs will help students to assess their interests and capabilities and to gain specific skills related to their career plans. Co-operative education and work-experience programs are two common means that schools use to accomplish this.

Parental input and support

Because most parents are very concerned about the future of their children, they should be involved in the program in an appropriate way. Parental input into the transition process both provides a possible resource to SWT program leaders and gives parents an opportunity to learn how to support their children constructively.

Interagency agreements

A student over the age of eighteen who has fairly challenging needs may require additional support from community-service agencies. In order for the student to obtain the necessary support, an agreement should be made between the school and the appropriate agencies in consultation with the student. The agreement should address the specific support that the student requires, the types of resources required, and the responsibilities of both the school and the community agency. The parameters of such agreements should be reviewed as necessary.

C. Employment

Employer input, job-site training, and follow-along services are three ingredients that are crucial to the employment phase.

Employer input

The willingness of employers to receive students for training purposes is critical to the success of the program. Their advice to schools can be invaluable both in developing an SWT program that takes into account their concerns and in developing job prospects.

Job-site training

Actual experience in the workplace is one of the main ways in which individuals can acquire the abilities that they need to become valuable employees. Job-site training helps students to discover what real work involves and also reveals the kinds of adjustments that may need to be made in the work situation itself to accommodate students' specific limitations.

Follow-along services

After a student is placed in a job, it may be necessary to have someone from the school or a community agency in regular contact with both the student and the employer. Experience has shown that job-retention rates improve substantially when such "follow-along" services are provided. There are many reasons why they may be important:

- The employee's supervisors may need support or training.
- The employee's interests and abilities may change, which will require an adjustment in the transition plan or the work environment.
- Additional training may be required as a result of the installation of new equipment in the workplace or changes in the job.
- The employee may change residence and may need help in finding transportation.
- The employee may need help with some aspect of his or her career, such as getting a promotion.

The SWT Team

Students with disabilities, their parents, educators, employers, and others all have significant roles to play if an SWT program is to be successful. The following are the main individuals or groups involved in the program. The descriptions of their roles that are included here are not exhaustive. A variety of other tasks and activities that any one or several of the groups may need to undertake are likely to be identified. Educators and community-service-agency personnel in particular are in a unique position to foster the development of needed local services and employment opportunities because of their broad social networks and their experience in relating to persons with disabilities.

- **Students with disabilities** have the right to be involved in all decisions affecting their lives. They should be represented, through self-advocacy groups, on important planning councils or advisory committees related to the SWT program.

- **Parents** should also be represented on committees related to the SWT program. They can contribute to their children's transition planning, are a valuable resource in finding potential work placements or suitable housing for their children, and may be able to provide some of the transportation required (e.g., to or from job-training sites).

- **Employers** provide work opportunities and, if possible, training sites. (Some employers train entry-level employees as a normal part of their activities.) Employers usually are prepared to work with schools and community-service agencies, provided that the agencies understand the requirements of the work or business. SWT leaders need to keep in mind that employing organizations can only survive if they meet their goals (one of these goals in the private sector is to make a profit). Employers should be involved in the establishment of an employment resource council (see page 8).

- **Union representatives** can provide support for the SWT concept. Most unions and labour organizations have policies (at least at the national and provincial levels) that endorse the employment of persons with disabilities. Union representatives can assist in the interpretation of the SWT program to employees in the workplace and can provide ongoing support for the program. They too should be involved in an employment resource council.

- **Educators** are responsible for students' actual instruction. They take the lead role in transition planning and all related activities for students, in determining the range of support available through community-service agencies, and in ensuring that appropriate transportation is available to and from the worksite.

- **Community-service-agency personnel** can identify and co-ordinate support funding for work placements when it is needed for persons with disabilities over the age of eighteen. For adults with disabilities they provide job-placement, follow-along, counselling, and personal-support services, among others. They also provide consultation in regards to making physical modifications to the workplace.

The Role of an Employment Resource Council (ERC)

An employment resource council (ERC) can form a valuable link between school programs and other existing resources and the workplace. The general purpose of such an organization is to provide informed advice, aggressive leadership, and assistance in facilitating the employment of students with disabilities. For example, it can:

- provide advice on how to design the SWT program so that it best accommodates the opportunities offered by and the constraints faced by each participating group and help to define the roles and responsibilities that each of these groups will fulfil;
- identify employers who may have training or work opportunities for students with disabilities (e.g., employers with progressive personnel policies);
- identify employment needs and opportunities in the community that the SWT program should take into account in planning for the future;
- develop co-ordinated strategies among businesses, community-service agencies, and schools in finding training and work opportunities, placing students with disabilities in such sites, providing follow-up services, and so on;
- identify marketing and information-sharing strategies for SWT program personnel;
- communicate to employers the benefits of giving training and employment to SWT students (e.g., by providing students with valuable experience in being interviewed, organizations themselves benefit from the opportunity to train their staff to conduct interviews);

- provide advice with respect to training-program goals;
- facilitate the placement of students (e.g., by providing introductions to employers for SWT personnel);
- encourage the business community (employers and unions), schools, community-service agencies, and people with disabilities to participate in the program;
- resolve problems of program implementation when they arise.

The majority of the members of an ERC should be employers, but the council should also include representatives from education, community-service agencies, unions, and advocacy groups. Members should include company executives as well as lower-ranking company or organization officials.

An organization similar to an ERC may already exist in the community under another name, such as industry-education council, business-advisory council, social-resources council, or community industrial-training committee (often established by a community college). If such an organization already exists, it could be requested to expand its mandate to include the SWT program.

Resource Materials

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. *The Education of the Handicapped Adolescent: Innovative Approaches to the Transition From School to Adult and Working Life*. Toronto: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1986.

Curry-Smithson, Charles. *Partnership With Industry: A Manual for Involving Business and Industry in Vocational Rehabilitation*. Bethesda, Md.: Goodwill Industries of America, Inc., 1985.

Employment and Immigration Canada. *Job Futures: An Occupational Outlook to 1992*. Ottawa: Employment and Immigration Canada, 1986.

Health and Welfare Canada. *The Health of Canadians: Report of the Canada Health Survey*. Ottawa: Health and Welfare Canada, 1982.

Lynch, Kevin P.; Kiernan, William E.; and Stark, Jack A. *Prevocational and Vocational Education Needs for Special Needs Youth*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1982.

McCarthy, Pat; Everson, Jane; Moon, Sherril; and Barcus, Mike, eds. *School-to-Work Transition for Youth With Severe Disabilities*. Richmond, Va.: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1985.

Ontario Manpower Commission. *Employment and the Physically Handicapped of Ontario*. Toronto: Ministry of Labour, Ontario, 1982.

Ontario, Task Force on Employers and Disabled Persons. *Linking for Employment: A Report of the Task Force on Employers and Disabled Persons*. Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1983.

Task Force Established by the Presidents, Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. *College Services to Special Needs Students*. Report of the Task Force Established by the Presidents, Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Sudbury, Ont.: Cambrian College of Applied Arts and Technology, 1986.

Wilcox, Barbara, and Bellamy, G. Thomas. *Design of High School Programs for Severely Handicapped Students*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1982.

2

Training for Successful Job Placement



Introduction

The ultimate measure of the success of an SWT program is whether or not students find jobs that match their skills and interests. For some students the training approaches used in an SWT program will be similar to those for students with no definable disabilities. For others a modest adjustment in either the training environment or approaches may be required. For students with significant

learning-related impairments, particularly those in their late teens, training seems to work best when it is related to a specific job.

There are six components that are important to the success of training leading to permanent employment: (1) the assessment of the student's needs, (2) the development of a student transition plan, (3) the job-site selection and work-environment analysis, (4) placement, (5) supported employment, and (6) follow-along activities.

Assessment of Student Needs

The SWT planning process must begin with a thorough knowledge of the student. Since the student with a disability knows his or her interests and needs best, it makes sense to begin with a discussion of these with the student. Thereafter, other sources of information should be pursued. For example, a broader understanding of the student's interests and abilities can be gained through interviews with parents and teachers. The student's academic ability can be determined from school records without a need for additional psychological or other tests. The nature of the student's disability can be assessed from medical data.

A functional assessment should determine the student's general ability to function in the community. Information gained from interviews and other sources should be used to prepare a summary of data on the following items:

- the number of environments in which the student functions (e.g., school, home, community, and recreational settings)
- the number and kinds of interactions and skills required in each environment
- the extent to which these interactions and skills compare to those experienced by the student's non-handicapped peers
- the degree of independence that the student experiences in each environment
- the age appropriate and inappropriate activities in which the student engages in each environment

Information from this summary can be used to establish the resources that are required and the areas of training that will have a bearing on the student's ultimate success in a job.

The assessment should also determine the student's specific work-related skills. The observation of the student's performance in a real work setting during a work-experience placement will provide information about specific skills and student characteristics that can be used to formulate objectives. The following are some of the areas that should be observed:

- initiative and motivation
- endurance
- attention to task
- reinforcement needs
- appearance
- communication skills
- family support
- functional reading and math
- knowledge of work processes
- strength
- orienting ability
- ability to adapt to change

- physical mobility
- productivity
- social interactions
- independence
- handling of criticism and stress
- use of tools and equipment

The information obtained will be used to formulate a functional training plan. For example, students with fairly minor degrees of disability (whether physical, sensory, or learning) may have many of the same skills as have other students and may need to learn only those that are relevant to getting and keeping a job. Students with more significant disabilities, however, may need to learn a much broader variety of skills, including personal-care, community-survival, domestic, and leisure skills. If the information is not already available, a functional assessment of these areas should be undertaken. All areas should be covered for students with a broad range of needs, while a more limited approach can be taken with students having fewer needs.

Development of a Student Transition Plan

A student transition plan should specify the goals and objectives that the student wishes to achieve and the ways in which they will be accomplished. The following five steps are the major components of such a plan.

Step 1. An individual transition team is organized for each student as soon as it becomes evident that the student requires transition support. Planning might begin as early as age thirteen or fourteen. The members of the team should include the following individuals: the student; his or her parents, if appropriate; the school personnel involved with the student's transition; any community-service

workers involved with the student's transition; the student's employer, if appropriate; an advocate; others.

Step 2. The initial transition-team meeting is held, and immediate and long-term objectives are defined. These might include the following:

- long-term goals for employment
- vocational training goals
- goals for community living (housing and related matters) and related skills (e.g., the use of transportation facilities, the use of money, social skills, the care of adaptive equipment such as a wheelchair)

Step 3. Transition activities are implemented. This will involve the following:

- the setting-up of vocational learning experiences in the community
- the arranging of job try-outs

- the arranging of other learning experiences in the school or community
- visits by an SWT worker to the student at a training site to make regular observations
- the arranging of changes in the nature of the support services as needed

Step 4. The student transition plan is updated. The team should meet at least once a year (more often may be necessary) to review progress, make adjustments in goals if need be, and update responsibilities. Periodic meetings are important because students may develop new career goals, parents may become increasingly willing to support independent living, and teachers may have suggestions for new learning objectives.

Step 5. A job-placement meeting is held. If a student has been identified as in need of transition support early enough, he or she should be ready for a final planning meeting by his or her final year in the secondary school program. At this meeting the team should:

- finalize plans for meaningful employment and community living;
- assign continuing responsibilities;
- review and update, when appropriate, the agreements among community agencies, particularly those procedures related to continuing the communication between the school and the community agencies on the well-being of the student.

Job-Site Selection and Work-Environment Analysis

After a student's career interests have been assessed, the job sites that are suitable for training should be determined. Two general approaches might be used:

- Students can be invited to help identify possibilities from amongst the people they or their families know.
- Alternatively, the student's interests can be matched with available job sites developed through a job-market survey (see page 20).

The first approach has the merit of being most like what many students do. Consequently, this might be pursued whenever possible. The second approach provides both a good fall-back position and a data base from which to provide the student with ideas.

The kinds of jobs for which students in an SWT program are equipped vary widely, even for students with challenging disabilities. In many instances the kinds of jobs for which

people with disabilities have traditionally been considered have been very limited. SWT program leaders find that job possibilities can be found by keeping an open mind, through perseverance, and through creative problem solving.

Once a specific job has been identified as a training site, its appropriateness for the student and the strength, endurance, and communication skills it requires of the student should be analysed. This is done by interviewing the employer and the employees and by observing them at work. A "job-demand analysis" could be conducted with the use of available guides. This will determine the task or environmental modifications that may be desirable for the student.

The following guidelines will help SWT personnel to analyse both jobs and work environments:

- Sufficient time should be allowed to observe all of the work areas in which job duties are to be performed.
- All of the employee's work activities should be sequentially listed. The approximate times to be spent in each work area and the movement from one area to another should be noted.

- Any work-related interactions between employees should be recorded. It is important to know the kind of communication needed to do the job.
- Any particular environmental barriers (physical or social) should be noted.

- The work supervisor or employer should review the worksite analysis to determine which aspects of the job or the environment could be modified.
- SWT personnel should not interrupt the work flow, but if the employer approves, workers could be questioned briefly about their jobs.

Placement

A student may be placed in a job for training purposes or for employment. The individual who takes the responsibility for the job placement – whether a job coach (see the next subsection), a placement counsellor, or another individual – must relate well to both the student and the employer and should conduct interviews with both parties to prepare them for placement. He or she should then be involved on a regular basis.

The procedures that are followed as part of the placement process are important learning experiences for both the student and the employer. As in any job-finding process, an important first step is to arrange an interview between the student and the employer. Once an appointment has been scheduled, it may be useful to arrange pre-interview meetings with both the employer and the student to prepare them for the interview. A pre-interview meeting with the employer is an opportunity to:

- introduce the potential employee;
- discuss openly the capabilities and limitations of the student as well as any special considerations or modifications in the work area or equipment that might be needed;
- review the general nature of the training and the approach that will be taken to it.

One or several meetings with the student should also be arranged to discuss:

- the job requirements (a visit to the potential workplace may be desirable);
- related factors such as transportation, motivation and interest, family support, and the suitability of the student's social skills;

- matters such as appropriate clothing for the interview, proper etiquette and behaviour during the interview (the introduction, the interview itself, and the leave taking), anticipated questions and their answers, directions for getting to the interview, and type of information needed for the interview.

Whether the job coach or counsellor accompanies the student to the interview depends on the student. The preference would be for the student and the employer to meet on their own. If necessary, the coach or counsellor might accompany the student but remain in the background to observe the interview. In some instances it may be appropriate for the coach or counsellor to take a more active role. At the conclusion of an interview it is beneficial to have a “debriefing” meeting with the student to review topics such as the following: the questions that the student could answer satisfactorily, the questions that presented difficulties, the extent to which the student was able to present his or her strengths.

After a job placement is arranged, the coach or counsellor should congratulate the new employee and notify relevant people of the student's success so that any necessary preparations can be made (e.g., clothing purchases, the finalizing of transportation arrangements).

Supported Employment

Students with a fairly minor degree of disability often will learn the skills for a given job, or any other area of activity, as readily as students with no disability, through a process of demonstration, explanation, trial with feedback, more trial, and so on. Students with severely disabling conditions (e.g., severe forms of cerebral palsy or mental handicap) often will require a patient “hands-on” approach to training. For the latter group a supported work strategy involving a job coach should be considered.

A job coach is someone available on the job site, on a full-time or part-time basis, for as long as is required. *Flexibility* is the key word to describe both the amount of time to be spent as well as the tasks required from a job coach. Sometimes assistance is required for only two or three weeks, sometimes for as much as several months, and sometimes only intermittently. As a student becomes more competent and confident in his or her abilities, the presence of the job coach becomes less important and is gradually eliminated.

The job coach who will be most likely to be successful is one who:

- has had a wide variety of work-related experiences;
- is interested in learning about new environments and new challenges;

- enjoys and is good at creative problem solving;
- is goal-directed; and
- enjoys working with people.

The job coach is responsible for teaching job skills and such related skills as how to use transportation facilities, how to interact socially, and how to use personal protective equipment. This one-to-one training approach has proven to be an economical way of helping persons with severe disabilities to enter the labour force. In these cases the phases of instruction generally are (a) orientation to the job, (b) skill training, and (c) skill stabilization.

A job coach may be obtained through a number of means:

- School boards sometimes allocate specific staff for this purpose.
- Community-service agencies may agree to provide one. They, in turn, may be reimbursed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.
- Community colleges and universities with human-service programs (e.g., for occupational therapists, developmental service workers) may be pleased to make practicum placements for this purpose.

Job coaches are currently being provided in all three of these ways in Ontario.

Follow-Along Activities

After the student has been placed on a work-site, the task of assessing his or her performance begins. It is essential that the assessment be done on a regular basis (e.g., every two weeks) to ensure that the student is kept aware of his or her performance.

The student's performance should be evaluated by the employer or worksite supervisor in co-operation with the student's teacher, guidance counsellor, or job coach (if one is involved). In order to facilitate the assessment process, the school or community-service personnel should have ongoing contact with the student and the employer. Visits might be

interspersed with telephone contacts. The following questions should be routinely asked of the employer:

- Is the student employee performing the job satisfactorily?
- Is there any need for additional training or retraining to improve his or her level of performance or promotion potential?
- Are there any difficulties either with the worksite or with social relationships in the workplace?
- Have there been changes in supervisory personnel and do new supervisors need some assistance?
- Should alternate employment be sought for the student?
- Is the employer willing to accept other SWT students or graduates?
- Based on experiences in this workplace, are there adjustments that should be made to the SWT program?

The following questions could be asked of the student:

- Are there any difficulties either with the worksite, the work itself, or the social relationships in the workplace?
- Are the supports that are being provided adequate?
- Is there anything that the job coach or counsellor should have told the student that would have eased the transition to the worksite?

The involvement of school and community-service personnel and the frequency of their contact with the student and the employer may increase with the degree of severity of a student's disability.

Resource Materials

Avenue II Community Program Services. "Staff Orientation Manual" (1986). Available from 122 Cumberland Street South, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 5R8.

Brown, L.; Shiraga, B.; York, J.; Zanella, K.; and Rogan, P. "A Life Space Analysis Strategy for Students With Severe Handicaps" and "Ecological Inventory Strategies for Students With Severe Handicaps". Unpublished manuscripts. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin, 1984.

Gold, Marc W. *Try Another Way*. Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1982.

Moon, S.; Goodall, P.; Barcus, M.; and Brooke, V. "The Supported Work Model of Competitive Employment for Citizens With Severe Handicaps: A Guide for Job Trainers". Richmond, Va.: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1986.

Ontario, Ministry of Labour. Handicapped Employment Program. *Supported Employment: A Discussion Paper*. Toronto: Ministry of Labour, Ontario, 1987.

3

Situating Students in the Workplace



Conducting a Job-Market Survey

One of the first tasks for the SWT leader is to determine the potential jobs that are available. This is done through an analysis of local employment opportunities. At this point the purpose is not to locate specific jobs or training opportunities, but to identify the potential of the local job market. The nature of this survey should be made clear to everyone contacted for information.

When conducting a job-market survey, SWT workers are advised to:

- obtain lists of employers in the area from the local Chamber of Commerce, the business-development office in the municipal government, and the local library. These sources usually have information on such important items as annual revenue, number of employees, and product lines, as well as the names of chief executive officers. Information should also be sought on new employers moving into the area, new occupations, and occupations for which there is insufficient vocational training;

- conduct a direct survey of employers to identify the types of jobs available. This is a good time to begin a filing system;
- obtain information on current employment trends from the Canada Employment Centre. Screen newspaper advertisements for an indication of potentially suitable jobs;
- consult community rehabilitation agencies to determine what initiatives they have taken to locate jobs and offer to collaborate with them to avoid duplication;
- ask all sources about specific job requirements – the work skills required, how much experience or education is needed, and whether there are special requirements (e.g., a driver's licence);
- update work profiles at least annually. Firms that do not hire now may change their plans in the future. Conversely, a skill that is in demand today may not be needed in another year.

Marketing the SWT Program

Marketing the benefits of the SWT program will pave the way for a positive reception of the students. The employment resource council can provide valuable advice in this regard. A variety of methods can be used. These include the following:

- informing the news media of new developments and success stories
- producing brochures and audio-visual materials (or distributing materials acquired from other programs)
- speaking to business groups, community organizations, and service clubs
- making presentations at conferences and conducting seminars and workshops in the local area

A more concerted approach would be to invite groups of employers (twelve to fifteen at a time) to breakfast or luncheon meetings for a brief presentation. (Time should be allowed for a question-and-answer period.) After the event, participants should be contacted by telephone or in person and encouraged to become involved in the program.

Meetings can also be arranged with local union leaders to outline the SWT program and to solicit their advice. The provincial or national position of the unions towards the employing of disabled people (most unions have adopted supportive policies) can be examined in advance of the meetings to determine answers to questions such as the following:

- Are they concerned with employment equity issues similar to those facing people with disabilities (e.g., women's issues, racism, protecting the environment)?
- Are they concerned with health and safety issues?
- Do they promote the need for employee-assistance programs?

Note that the timing of such a meeting should be carefully considered. For example, if a union is preoccupied with contract negotiations or elections, it will be difficult to get a fair hearing for the SWT program.

Approaching Employers

Once the community's labour needs are clear, employers must be contacted about training or job openings. The attitude of employers towards students with disabilities will differ from that of an educator or another human-service professional in one fundamental way: whereas the latter individual's central purpose is to assist the student, the employer's first concern is to maximize productivity. Within that attitude, however, employers have a broad range of responses towards students with disabilities as potential employees – from active interest to outright resistance. Still, even a negative attitude can be overcome.

In approaching potential employers, SWT workers should be familiar with each organization's administrative structure and should establish contact as high up the corporate ladder as possible. Members of the employment resource council, students' parents, and other resource people may be able to arrange personal introductions. Another approach is to send an introductory letter followed by a telephone call to arrange an exploratory meeting. The purpose of such a meeting is to describe the program, inquire about training or job openings, and convey the message that students with disabilities are good candidates for positions that may be available. Employers

need accurate information. Above all they need to meet students with disabilities and to see for themselves what productive, skilful, and well-adjusted employees they can make. Employers should also be informed that the SWT program offers the following advantages:

- the opportunity to observe potential employees before hiring
- once students are trained, a ready source of prescreened and tested employees
- lower turnover rates and, hence, significant savings in hiring and training costs
- continuing follow-up services as needed
- guaranteed productivity during the training period
- an excellent community image, which is useful in marketing

The employer may also be interested in knowing that a number of studies (e.g., E.I. DuPont de Nemours, 1982) have shown that properly trained people with disabilities are usually average or better-than-average employees in terms of criteria such as job performance, reliability, attendance and punctuality, job retention, morale, adherence to safety practices, and loyalty to the company.

When approaching employers, SWT workers are advised to:

- arrange appointments at times that are convenient to the employer;
- determine, before the meeting, whether they are seeking training-site placements, full-time positions, or both;

- dress appropriately for the nature of the site where the meeting will take place;
- address the employer's point of view and the need for qualified and productive employees. SWT workers should use the language of the business community;
- explain that an SWT team member can be on site to support the student, provide training when needed, and make sure that the work is completed;
- ask for specific information about potential and existing job openings and record all of this information on forms that have been prepared for the purpose;
- arrange for a tour of the work area in order to analyse job duties, required skills, and the physical and social environment;
- use an affirmative approach and avoid putting the employer on the defensive (For example, the following statement has been used successfully to begin interviews with potential employers: "You may have positions in your company that could be filled by some of our students.");
- encourage employers to ask questions and be prepared to provide practical, work-related details about each student;
- follow up the meeting with a letter of appreciation in which the issues that were discussed are summarized and the next step to be taken is specified.

Related Issues

There are a number of issues of which SWT workers should be particularly aware. Some of these may be raised by an employer; others should be of concern to the SWT program personnel.

Insurance and Workers' Compensation costs

Several studies have shown that insurance and Workers' Compensation costs do not go up for students with disabilities for a number of reasons:

- People with disabilities are aware of their limitations and have spent their entire lives finding ways to adapt and to compensate for them.

- Only about 3 per cent of workers with disabilities require significant modifications to the work environment.
- Applying barrier-free design principles to the workplace for the benefit of employees with disabilities makes it easier and safer for everyone.
- People with disabilities, when properly placed, have an equal or better safety record than other employees, both on and off the job.

Insurance companies are aware of these facts. As well, they set premiums on the basis of a company's performance record, rather than on the composition of its work force. Occasionally an insurance company may charge a higher fee to cover people with disabilities. In such cases the employer should be invited to work with the SWT team, the employment resource council, and advocacy groups to ensure that proposed increases are legitimate and fair. Such action will help other employers and disabled people as well.

Workers' Compensation Act coverage is handled as follows. While people with disabilities are students, and part of an SWT program, coverage is paid for by the Ministry of Education. (Technically, the students are deemed to be in the employ of the Ministry of Education.) This status continues when the students are at the work station, so long as they do not receive a wage (although they may receive expense allowances or honoraria). If the students are placed on the payroll, the coverage is then paid by the employer as it is for any other employees. If an employer expresses a concern that an employee's disability may lead to injury on the job, SWT personnel should point out that the Workers' Compensation Board has a Second Injury and Enhancement Fund that is specifically designed to protect employers against such problems. The employer should be encouraged to obtain detailed information from the local Workers' Compensation Board office; alternatively, the SWT worker can offer to obtain such information for the employer.

Employee benefits and special privileges

People with disabilities should receive the same treatment and benefits as other employees.

Wages and stipends

Students with disabilities should be given exactly the same considerations as other individuals. If the normal practice is to provide an employee in training with a stipend, the same procedure should apply to these students. If an employer decides to hire one of them, the standard wage should be paid. An exception might be made if the individual's productivity is much less than accepted standards. Provisions are currently being developed by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to offset the cost of hiring such individuals.

The role of unions

If employers claim that their unions will not allow them to hire people with disabilities, these claims can be investigated. For example, a meeting can be arranged with the local union president to explore the nature of the barrier:

- Is it a seniority question based on job classifications? If so, how rigid are the classifications?
- Is it an issue in the collective agreement (e.g., "light-duty" jobs for certain groups of workers)?
- Are the reasons being given the real ones?
- Can the language of the agreement be modified?

Note that the modifications being sought may benefit existing employees as well as SWT candidates. If the working conditions (e.g., health and safety) of union members will be improved, a union will be much more likely to remove barriers to the hiring of people with disabilities.

Promotions, demotions, transfers, terminations, and layoffs

Changes in employment status can be of concern to the employee with a disability and the employer alike. Such changes also lend themselves to misinterpretation and, on occasion, to discriminatory practices. Confusion can be avoided if answers are obtained to questions like the following:

- What are the criteria for promotions or demotions? Who is responsible for these decisions?
- In what circumstances is a transfer made from one area or department to another? How is such a decision arrived at?
- In what circumstances are employees automatically dismissed? What is the process for doing so?
- Are layoffs common? What is the procedure for rehiring workers?
- What is the role of the union if there is one?

Employers may have some concerns about whether or not they can lay off or fire a disabled employee who is not performing well without getting into trouble. They should be

assured that this is possible if appropriate procedures are followed. As with other employees, the preference is to minimize the chances of having to lay off an employee with a disability through careful hiring. (SWT personnel may in fact be able to help employers to set up improved criteria for selecting employees.)

The advantage of hiring a person who has graduated from the SWT program is that the employer acquires a “known quantity”. Regular performance assessments during the training period, as well as the employer’s own observations, allow better-than-average judgments to be made as to whether or not a given student will be able to do the job when hired. Beyond this, the usual probationary period should apply to employees with disabilities as it does to other individuals. As long as a reasonable accommodation is made for an individual’s disability, the employer will be acting responsibly.

Resource Materials

E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company Inc. *Equal to the Task*. Wilmington, Del.: E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company Inc., 1982.

Moon, S.; Goodall, P.; Barcus, M.; and Brooke, V. *The Supported Work Model of Competitive Employment for Citizens With Severe Handicaps: A Guide for Trainers*. Richmond, Va.: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1986.

Ontario, Ministry of Education. “Workers Compensation Coverage for Students in Work Education Programs”. Policy/Program Memorandum No. 76A, April 23, 1987. Toronto: Ministry of Education, Ontario.

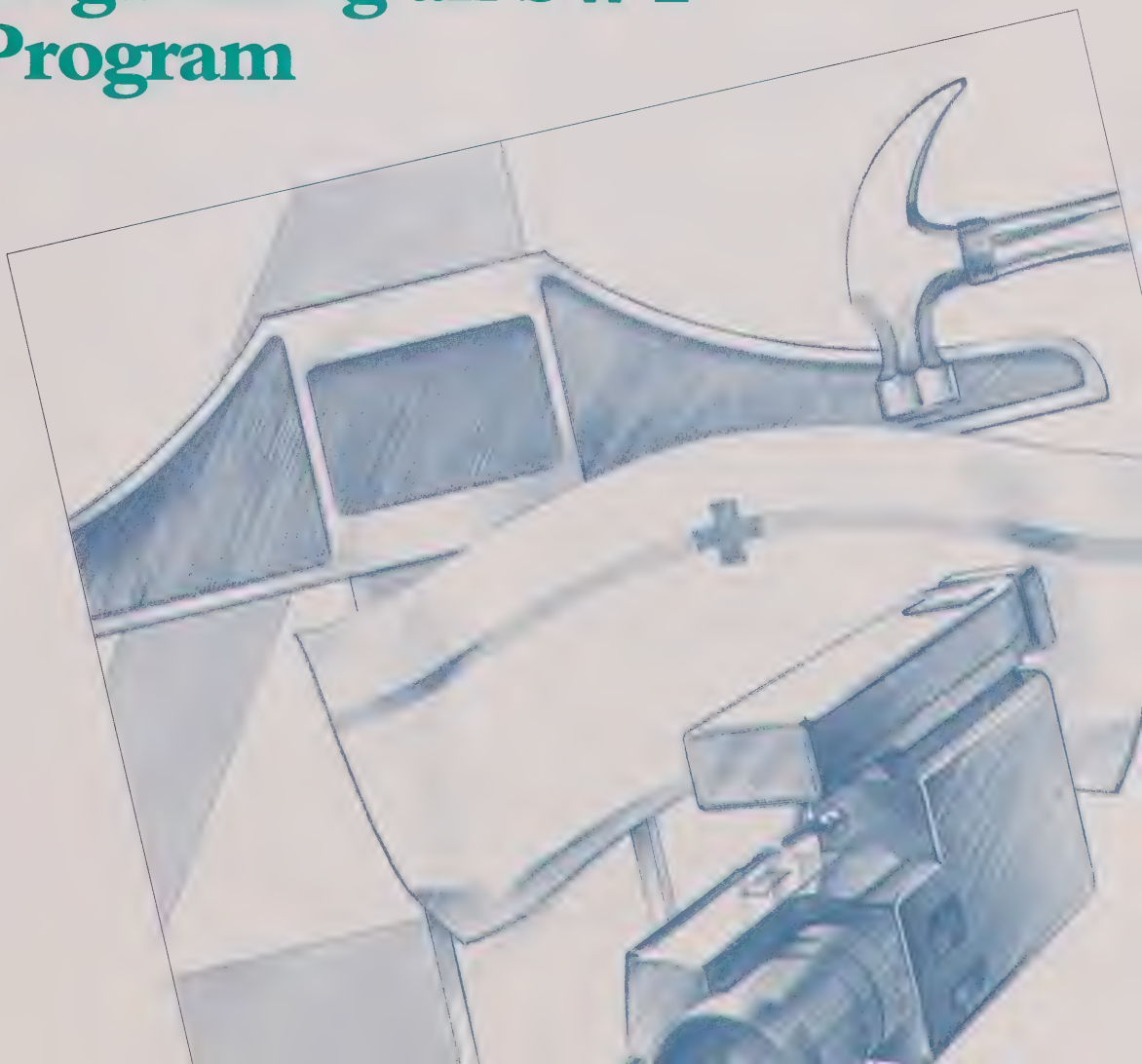
Ontario, Ministry of Labour. Handicapped Employment Program. *Taking Aim: Job Search Strategies for People With Disabilities*. Toronto: Ministry of Labour, Ontario, 1986.

_____. *What It Takes: Planning an Employment Equity Program for People With Disabilities*. Toronto: Ministry of Labour, Ontario, 1986.

Pati, G.C.; Adkins, J.I.; and Morrison, G. *Managing and Employing the Handicapped*. Lake Forest, Ill.: The Human Resource Press, 1982.

4

Organizing an SWT Program



Getting Started

If a school board has had very little experience in incorporating students with disabilities into regular school programs, it is important to become familiar with the field. SWT personnel can begin by:

- getting to know a few students with some significant degree of disability and becoming personally acquainted with their interests in life;
- familiarizing themselves with SWT initiatives in a nearby school board or obtaining suggestions from one of the following sources: the Ministry of Education, the Handicapped Employment Program of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, or the provincial offices of community agencies;

- forming a small group of other teachers, parents, students with disabilities, and others to examine the SWT idea. This handbook might be used as a study aid;
- developing an SWT plan around two or three students. A small beginning will allow the team members to learn together, make mistakes that can easily be corrected, and work out the details of the many relationships and procedures that are an inevitable part of a larger program;
- involving the student with the disability in all aspects of the decision making. Since the student is likely to be the most “expert” about his or her own situation, this approach is likely to increase the program’s chances of success.

Establishing the Program

Once some experience has been gained in working with a few students, the program can be expanded. This will involve the following:

- exploring the variety of means by which SWT might be provided with resources (e.g., through the school board, various community agencies, and the community itself);

- formalizing the program within the board. The program should be formally designated as a program – perhaps within a context that provides co-operative education or work-experience programming;
- initiating the job-market survey and other activities outlined in this manual;
- broadening the project’s network of contacts – within the school system, between the school system and community agencies, and between both of these and the employment sector.

Providing Resources for the Program

The SWT approach outlined in this handbook is much more economical than traditional approaches because it enables people with disabilities to assume a job directly. However, because it is relatively new, obtaining resources for the program may still be a challenge.

In the long run a given community will need to establish an ongoing mechanism to staff and finance the program. In all likelihood this will have to be negotiated. When a program is being established within a school, the following possibilities should be kept in mind:

- Under the Education Amendment Act, 1980 every school board is required to provide an appropriate educational program for its exceptional students, regardless of their exceptionality. Under this mandate, and with the resources available, specific personnel may be designated from the existing complement to assist in the SWT program. These individuals might include teachers, aides, guidance counsellors, and others. Existing programs already in place within a school board (e.g., co-operative education, work-experience, and linkage programs) should be expanded to include students with disabilities (a sizable proportion of school boards already do).
- The Ministry of Education makes available a variety of grants and funds that can assist the program. For example, the Co-operative Education and Transition-to-Employment Incentive Fund has been established to assist school boards to initiate or expand both co-operative education and SWT programs. The Ties to Business and Industry Incentive Fund is also available. Specific funding is provided through these means to help school boards to overcome financial barriers that prevent the participation of some students in co-operative education programs and to appoint a resource person to assist school-board personnel.

- The Ministry of Colleges and Universities has made funds available to community colleges and universities for special initiatives to assist students with disabilities.
- The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides a number of support programs. In co-operation with the federal government, through the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act, funding for selected training and support services may be provided for up to eighteen months to help adults with disabilities to obtain suitable jobs in the community. A more major source of support for SWT programming for persons with developmental disabilities is available under the Developmental Services Act. Local community-service agencies can arrange funding through this means for job-coach, placement, and follow-along services. The ministry also makes available resources for attendant care for persons with severe physical limitations, interpreter and intervener services for persons with sensory impairments, and other services.
- The Ministry of Labour, through its Handicapped Employment Program, provides help with the development of strategies that lead to the hiring, retention, and career advancement of persons with disabilities, as well as support services (e.g., small-business advice, employment-equity consulting, and materials for educators related to career counselling and job search).
- Canada Employment Centres also have funds available through the Canadian Jobs Strategy programs. Altogether, six programs exist to ensure that target groups such as people with disabilities are included. For example, the Innovations program provides grants to start up innovative bridging and employment-creation programs; the Job Entry program provides funds to assist with the entry of individuals into the workplace; the Skill Shortages program provides funds for skill training; and other programs fund job development. A variety of costs are covered through these programs, including training costs and wage subsidies for employers.

- Local community-service agencies such as associations for community living (or associations for the mentally retarded), March of Dimes, Canadian Hearing Society, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and others make available a variety of support resources, often with the financial support of the provincial and federal government sources identified above.

SWT programs involve the combined efforts of many individuals and organizations. All SWT programs will benefit from exchanges among these individuals and organizations. Some initiatives are within the field of education; others are in the community-service, labour, or business sector. Appendix A provides a beginning list of groups that will prove useful in the initial stages of establishing a program. The following publication provides help in locating the many programs and services available to people with disabilities through the Ontario government: Ontario, Office for Disabled Persons, *Guide for Disabled Persons to Ontario Government Programs and Services* (Toronto: Office for Disabled Persons, Ontario, 1987).

It is hoped that this handbook will be kept in an easily accessible location and used as a reference guide in developing SWT programs for students with disabilities.

It should be noted that not every student with a disability needs the type of program planning and support outlined in this document. Teachers, moreover, should be on their guard against easy generalizations and should not assume that *all* students with disabilities require special assistance. If these students are to become successful contributors to our society by participating in the work force, we must help them to become self-sufficient and independent. They need to live in a society that offers understanding, acceptance, and support – one that will assist them to build the bridges to employment.

Resources

A variety of resources are available to help an SWT program succeed. Advice and assistance may be obtained in connection with most of the special aspects of such a program, including:

- consultation on the employment of persons with handicaps and on affirmative action
- aids and job adaptations
- attendant care
- interpreter and intervener services
- transportation
- barrier-free design
- human rights
- employment services
- financial incentives

The following is a list of some of the agencies and organizations that provide assistance. In many cases they will have member organizations or offices in the local community. This list is not exhaustive. Many other organizations devoted to assisting persons with disabilities have developed around the province. The reader should contact the organizations that are most likely to be of immediate assistance.

Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped (ARCH)

40 Orchard View Boulevard
Suite 255

Toronto, Ontario M4R 1B9
(416) 482-8255
TDD*: (416) 482-1254

Alternative Computer Training for the Disabled

250 The Esplanade
Suite 203

Toronto, Ontario M5A 1J2
(416) 365-3330

Barrier Free Design Centre

150 Eglinton Avenue East
Suite 400

Toronto, Ontario M4P 1E8
(416) 488-0030

Bell Canada Telecommunication Centre for Special Needs

Bell-Trinity Square
North Tower – 1st Floor
483 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2E1
1-800-268-9243

B.O.O.S.T.

(Blind Organization of Ontario With Self-Help Tactics)

597 Parliament Street
Suite B3
Toronto, Ontario M4X 1W3
(416) 964-6838

Canada Employment Centre

Consult the blue pages of your telephone book for the office nearest you.

Canadian Diabetes Association

Ontario Divisional Office
232 Central Avenue
London, Ontario N6A 1M9
(519) 438-7235

Canadian Hearing Society

271 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2V3
(416) 964-9595
TDD*: (416) 964-0340

Canadian Mental Health Association

Metropolitan Toronto Branch
3101 Bathurst Street
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M6A 2A6
(416) 789-7957

Centre for Advancement in Work and Living (CAWL)

41-45 Chauncey Avenue
Etobicoke, Ontario M8Z 2Z2
(416) 231-2295

*Telecommunications Device for the Deaf

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Ontario Division
1929 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4G 3E8
(416) 486-2500
TDD*: (416) 486-2673

Canadian Paraplegic Association

520 Sutherland Drive
Toronto, Ontario M4G 3V9
(416) 422-5640 (national)
(416) 422-5644 (Ontario division)

Canadian Rehabilitation Council for the Disabled

1 Yonge Street
Suite 2110
Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E5
(416) 862-0340

Employment Equity Consulting Service

Canada Employment and Immigration
Commission (CEIC)
264 Adelaide Street East
Main Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1N1
(416) 973-3755

Epilepsy Ontario

Regional Office
5385 Yonge Street
Suite 207
Willowdale, Ontario M2N 5R7
(416) 229-2291

Goodwill Industries

234 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1M9
(416) 362-4711

Jewish Vocational Service of Metropolitan Toronto

74 Tycos Drive
Toronto, Ontario M6B 1V9
(416) 787-1151

Low Vision Association

145 Adelaide Street West
4th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3H4
(416) 868-1001

Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada

Ontario Regional Office
357 Bay Street
9th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2T7
(416) 363-2112

Office Responsible for Disabled Persons

700 Bay Street
3rd Floor
P.O. Box 322
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6
(416) 965-3165

On Our Own

Ontario Patients' Self-Help Association
1860A Queen Street East
Box 7251, Station A
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1X9
(416) 699-3192

Ontario Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (OACALD)

1901 Yonge Street
Suite 504
Toronto, Ontario M4S 2Z3
(416) 487-4107

Ontario Association for Community Living

1376 Bayview Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4G 3A3
(416) 483-4348

Ontario Federation for the Cerebral Palsied

Headquarters
1021 Lawrence Avenue West
Suite 303
Toronto, Ontario M6A 1C8
(416) 787-4595

Ontario Federation of Labour

15 Gervais Drive
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1Y8
(416) 441-2731

Ontario March of Dimes

60 Overlea Boulevard
Toronto, Ontario M4H 1B6
(416) 425-0501

Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities

101 Bloor Street West
13th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1P7
(416) 965-6407

Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

80 Grosvenor Street
6th Floor, Hepburn Block
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9
(416) 965-7825

Ontario Ministry of Education

900 Bay Street
22nd Floor, Mowat Block
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1L2
(416) 965-6407

Ontario Ministry of Labour

Handicapped Employment Program
400 University Avenue
10th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1T7
(416) 965-2321
TDD*: (416) 965-2817

Ontario Ministry of Skills Development

Youth Employment Program
700 Bay Street
2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z6
(416) 963-3000
1-800-387-0777
Toll-free TDD*: 1-800-387-0743

PUSH Ontario (Persons United for Self-Help in Ontario)

Provincial Office
597 Parliament Street
Suite 204
Toronto, Ontario M4X 1W3
(416) 923-6725
TDD*: (416) 923-6210

Salvation Army Transitional Employment Program

143 Lakeshore Boulevard East
Toronto, Ontario M5A 1B7
(416) 862-9880

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (V.R.S.)

Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

Consult the blue pages of your telephone book for the office nearest you.

War Amputations of Canada

Toronto Branch
Wedgewood Place
6043 Yonge Street
Willowdale, Ontario M2M 3W3
(416) 221-2130

Acknowledgements

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour wish to acknowledge the contributions of the many persons who participated in the development of this handbook. These included school board personnel, employers, and persons with disabilities. In particular, we would like to thank the Ontario Association for Community Living for its leadership and participation.



